

October 21, 2015
Testimony on HB 4915

Thank you, Chairman Franz and committee members for allowing me to issue testimony via this letter on behalf of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, unfortunately neither subject expert veterinarians nor myself were available to be present during this meeting.

First, I would like to thank the bill sponsor, Rep. Michael McCready for bringing this bill to committee. I know that he has done good work in this area, and we look forward to working with him and his office on this particular issue as we move forward. The necessity for this bill stems from the current location and content within the law regarding hold times. It is found in the *Use of Dogs and Cats for Research* law (PA 224 of 1969). Specifically, ***"A dealer, a county, city, village, or township operating a dog pound or animal shelter shall not sell or otherwise dispose of a dog or cat within 4 days after its acquisition. If the dog or cat has a collar, license, or other evidence of ownership, the operator of the pound or shelter shall notify the owner in writing and disposition of the animal shall not be made within 7 days from the date of mailing the notice"***

Because this hold time language is in the research law, some think it only applies to animals being sold for research. We do not see it that way and have a long history of enforcing it for all shelters regardless of the method of animal disposition. HB 4915 seeks to place this language into the *Pet Shops, Dog Pounds, and Animal Shelters* law (PA 287 of 1969) which we would support.

However, there remain a few issues that we would like to resolve with the bill sponsor including some small technical changes and a few possible changes that were agreed upon within work groups last session. **There is one major concern as the Department is not in support , the issue of Trap Neuter and Release program, due to public health concerns around zoonotic diseases (rabies, plaque, tularemia, tuberculosis, to name a few).** With that being said, we look forward to working with the bill sponsor on these issues in a timely fashion to address these issues.

Again, I apologize that I could not be here to answer questions of the committee, but as always please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or comments.

Respectfully,

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